

May 5, 2011

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Summary

Committee Members Present: Susan Boswell, Dr. Carl Heard (via phone), Dr. Esther Langston, Suzanne Thomas, Linda Lera Randle El, Taurus Duncan, Ylonda Dickerson, W. Dean Ishman, Jacque Haas

Facilitator: Linda Lera Randle El/Sherri LeMond

Clark County Staff Attending: Tim Burch, Sandy Jeantete, Bobby Gordon and Janet Brown

I. Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 11:44 a.m. by Chair: Linda Lera Randle El

II. Approval of January 6, 2011 & March 3, 2011 Meeting Summaries: Approved

III. Announcements from Members/Social Service Staff

- Susan Boswell: Nevada Energy is hosting the Senior Energy Assistance Expo at Cashman field on Saturday, August 13th. Letters have been sent to approx. 20,000 seniors. Next meeting I will bring flyers to distribute and will send them electronically to help provide assistance to our seniors 62 and older plus other essential services. Last year we gave over \$370,000 in assistance.
- Dean Ishman: Event 5/21 Henderson Pavilion, public shredding of documents.
- Tim: Recap from last meeting for those that were not there. I'm sitting as the new Interim Director for Social Service. Bobby Gordon is acting Assistant Director. Bobby, Sandy and I are serving as Social Service's Executive team.
- Tim: We have at least 2 C.A.C. vacancies. Any referrals from the group would be appreciated. I will be connecting with the commissioners to see if they have anyone they would like to refer. Individuals need to represent some of these services, mental health services, volunteers, general public, medical care, senior population, or special population (i.e. HIV). Looking to get them in by the start of the new fiscal year.

IV. Budget

- Tim: Clark County as a whole is being directed to plan on 9% reductions in each of the departments. Because we have a dedicated funding stream we anticipate ours to be closer to 13% range of reductions. We have been waiting to find out what the property tax actually was which actually came in at 8.59% so it was much lower than we were anticipating. We also have a decrease in the federal matching assistance program. We have to come up with \$2.7 million dollars that we didn't have to spend last year. So if you total the 8.59% and \$2.7 million dollars we are sitting around a budget cut of around 13%. As we have begun discussing our ideas with management we have been advised to wait until end of session to see what comes out and perhaps make one big change at the end.

Our anxiety internally elevates our employees are seeing other departments moving forward with their budgets and finalizing them but we are in a holding pattern for now. This will be our fourth round of the budget changes/cuts. Our direction now is plan for the worse so that we can be prepared. We don't foresee any plan that would not affect our clients. We are roughly talking about \$7 million dollars of operating costs. There will be significant impacts and we will keep you in the loop of what these changes mean.

V. Legislative Session: Tim Burch

- Handout provided by Tim re: testimony before the Assembly Committee
- The major items are long term care Medicaid match program, corresponding bill SB485 and then we will get into the add backs. We gave the assembly a background first of what we do here because all counties do different services. We are spending \$20 million on Long Term medical care this year. We have two levels of care: those individuals who are vent dependent and those who are not. To cover those costs it eats up a lot of our budget. Only way we can cover the folks that we cover right now is those who fall within 156% of Federal SSI rate and 300% Federal SSI daily rate we are able to access the Medicaid Match. We put up \$.50 cents and the State matches it with Federal funds. If this program wasn't in place our liability would look more like \$80 million dollars a year. This is a significant program that is much needed for the community especially those who are fragile and in need. The State is proposing to take the traditional rate that has been there since 1989 and move their liability to 132% year one and 124% in year two. That doubles our caseload and creates a \$24 million over biennium liability so it's \$11.9 million in year one and 12.1 million in year two. The State would run the program and we would write the check and give it over without interplay. They have also added more clients, like CHIPS clients which adds \$6 million more to the county. This is a volunteer contract, all in or all out, which means every county in the state has to be in. The \$240 million help for Social Service for State is a liability cap for only 6 rural counties and does not help Washoe or Clark County. We need this match money but we don't want to face the liability of SB 485. Senate 485 allows only the director of Health and Human Services to adjust the annual Medicare match. We can agree this year to 156% but can easily change next year to 117% which we could be bound for. Ultimately the hard decisions will have to be made by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Taurus: Discussion regarding nursing homes, home care and vent dependency.
- Suzanne Thomas: Discussion on issue with the regulation that implements reimbursing families vs. institution (Ex. Norway).
- Group discussion concluded on motions to explore possible changes with the regulations to get them to change this issue at State level.
 - 1.) First motion approved, ask staff to determine if there are regulations in making people eligible to allow for home assist to happen under the federal match. If it could happen at federal level what does our state level that implements this say. To testify individually to change regulation at state level to allow for persons to be taken care of at home at a significant savings to the tax payer and to allow us to help more people. To also establish a subcommittee to create a noise about this and the change that we want. (Suzanne Thomas, Taurus Duncan, Dr. Carl Heard and Linda Lera Randle El).

- 2.) Second motion approved: Request staff to draft letter for chairperson's approval signed by the C.A.C. that states we are in opposition of cutting funds that would decrease this matching dollar program. We state very clearly the passing of the buck phenomena that will occur if this is done and the people that will be impacted by this. Included in letter we strongly advise the state to look at their plan to include payment for in home care.
- Dr. Langston: We as individuals can send an email to our representatives.
- Dr. Carl Heard: As these letters are drafted that C.A.C. members get copied in order to send an individual letter to representatives.
- Sherri: Preferred timeframe to have this completed by.
- Tim: Budget is not finalized for the Dept. of Health and Human Services. We can draft a letter pretty quickly to get it send off. We can complete this in the next few business days. Legislature closes in June.
- Bobby: Just wanted to be clear about the two budgets that Tim spoke about which are the general fund and the medical services budget. The services we provide to the clients that come through our door comes through our general fund budget. If we take all of the general fund budget and dedicate it to the Medicaid match program that means we have no more rent money or utility assistance for people. The state takes the money but no one picks up the people because those people do not qualify under Medicaid for anything else. People are under the impression that if the state takes the money the services will continue but they don't for our people. So when you are writing your letters and doing the testimony, know that the questions that you should ask are if you taking the counties money and they have to spend it here are you going to pick up those people that have no place to stay. What kind of community when people cannot house themselves or when there are no money for medicine for people and all they have are the hospital emergency rooms. Our money is specific and the property tax money affects our community.
- Tim: Best support would be to be present and aware of the item before the B.C.C. to hear info presented and what clients present to the board.

VI. Public Input

- None received.

VIII. Adjournment:

- The meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

The next meeting of the CAC is scheduled for July 7, 2011, 11:30 a.m. at the Clark County Social Service office, 1600 Pinto Lane, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Summary prepared by:
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